



Miss Farren as Beatrice.



Miss Farren as Beatrice.

8
Much Ado about Nothing.

A COMEDY.

WRITTEN BY

SHAKESPEARE.

TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER'S BOOK.

AT THE

Theatre Royal, Drury - Lane.

LONDON:

Printed by R. BUTTERS, No. 79, Fleet-street, and sold by all Book-
sellers in Town and Country.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

M E N.

Don Pedro	—	—	Mr. Packer
Leonato	—	—	Mr. Bensley
Don John	—	—	Mr. Aickin
Claudio	—	—	Mr. Banister Jun.
Benedick	—	—	Mr. Kemble
Balthazer	—	—	Mr. Williams
Antonio	—	—	Mr. Hurst
Borachio	—	—	Mr. Usher
Conrade	—	—	Mr. Griffiths
Dogberry	—	—	Mr. Parsons
Verges	—	—	Mr. Carpenter
Friar	—	—	Mr. Wright
Town-Clerk	—	—	Mr. Baddeley
Sexton	—	—	Mr. Wrighten.

W O M E N.

Hero	—	—	Miss Pope
Beatrice	—	—	Mrs. Siddons
Margaret	—	—	Mrs. Bradshaw
Ursula	—	—	Miss Millidge.



Much Ado about Nothing.

ACT I. SCENE. *a Court before Leonato's House.*

Enter Leonato, Hero, Beatrice, and Messenger.

Leo. I Learnt in this letter, that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this ; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leo. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers ; I find here, that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine, call'd Claudio.

Mess. Much deserved on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro : he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him ; even so much, that joy could not shew itself modest enough, without a bage of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out in tears ?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness : there are no faces truer than those that are so wash'd.

Beat. I pray you, is Signior Montanto ; returned from the wars or no ?

Mess. I know none, of that name, Lady ; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for, Niece ?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars ? but how many hath he kil'd ? for, indeed, I promis'd to eat all his killing.

Leon. Faith, Niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much ; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, Lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victuals, and he hath help to eat it ; he's a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, Lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady ; but what is he to a lord.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece ; there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her ; they never meet, but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets no hing by that. In our last conflict, four or five of his wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one : so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and

his horse ; for it is all the wit that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now ? he hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is it possible ?

Beat. Very easily possible ; he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No ; an he were I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion ?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O lord, he will hang upon him like a disease ; he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio, if he have caught the Benedick ; it will cost him a thousand pounds ere he be cur'd.

Leon. You'll ne'er run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

(*A Flourish.*)

Mess. Don Pedro is approach'd.

Enter Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, Balthazar, and Don John.

Pedro. Good signior Leonato, you are come to meet trouble : the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace ; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain ; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly : I think, this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you ask't her ?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no ; for then were you a child.

Pedro. You have it full, Benedick ; we may guess by this what you are, being a man : truly, the lady favours herself ; be happy, lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

(*Prince and Leonato talk apart.*)

Beat. I wonder, that you will still be talking, signior Benedick ; no body marks you.

Bene. What my dear lady Disdain ! are you yet living ?

Beat. Is it possible, Disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as signior Benedick ? courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turn coat : but it is certain, I am lov'd of all ladies, only you excepted ; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women ; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood I am of your humour for that ; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind ! to some gentleman or other shall escape a predesignate scratcht face.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such ⁵
face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would, my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer, but keep your way, o' God's name I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old.

Pedro. This is the sum of all: Leonato—signior Claudio, and signior Benedick,—my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all; I tell him, we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays, some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear, he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.—Let me bid you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the prince ^{Bar} brother; I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you; I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

(Exeunt all but Benedick and Claudio.)

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of signior nato?

Bene. I noted her not, but I look'd on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No, I prythee; speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why i'faith, methinks, she is too low for an high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise; only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou think'st I am in sport; I pray thee, tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you enquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into; but speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting jack, come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the song.

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that I ever look'd on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter; there's her cousin, if she were not possess'd with such a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first day of May doth the last of December: but I hope, you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, tho' I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this, in faith? hath not the world one man, but he'll wear his cap with suspicion? shall I never see a

bachelor of threescore again? go to i'faith. If thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays: look, Don Pedro is return'd to seek you.

Re-enter Don Pedro and Don John.

Pedro What secret hath held you here, that you follow'd not Leonato's house?

Bene. I would, your Grace would constrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio, I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance;—he is in love; with whom? now that is your grace's part: mark, how short his answer is, with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it utter'd.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord, it is not so, nor 'twas not so; but indeed, God forbid it should be so.

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her, for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I speak mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her: that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheate winded in my forehead, all women shall pardon me: because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is, (for the which I may go the finer) I will live a bachelor.

Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, with hunger, my lord, not with love; prove, that ever I lose more blood with love, than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me.

Pedro. Well, as time shall try: in time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and set them in my forehead,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

7

and let me be vilely painted ; and in such great letters as they write, Here is good horse to hire, let them signify under my sign, Here you may see Benedick the marry'd man.

Pedro. Nay, if Cupid hath not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too them.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours ; in the mean time, good signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's, commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper ; for indeed, he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassy, and so I commit you—

Claud. To the tuition of God ; from my house, if I had it.—

Pedro. The sixth of July, your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not ; the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither ; ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leave you. (Exit.)

Claud. My leige, your highness now may do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how,

And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn

Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord ?

Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir ;

Dost thou affect her, Claudio ?

Claud. O my lord,

When you went onward on this ended action,

I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye ;

That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand

Than to drive liking to the name of love ;

But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts

Have left their plates vacant ; in their rooms

Come thronging soft and delicate desires,

All prompting me how fair young Hero is ;

Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently.

And tire the hearer with a book of words :

If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,

And I will break with her ; was't not to this end,

That thou began'st to twit so fine a story ?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,

That know love's grief by his complexion !

But lest my liking might too sudden seem,

I would have sav'd it with a longer treatise.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood ?

The fairest grant is the necessity ;

Look, what will serve, is fit ; 'tis once thou lov'st ;

And I will fit thee with a remedy.

I know, we shall have revelling to-night ;

I will assume my part in some disguise,

And tell fair Hero I am Claudio ;
 And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
 And take her hearing prisoner with the force
 And strong encounter of my amorous tale :
 Then, after, to her father will I break,
 And the conclusion is, she shall be thine ;
 In practice let us put it presently. (Exeunt.

Enter Don John and Conrade.

Con. What the goo-ger, my lord, why are you thus out of measure sad ?

John. There's no measure in the occasion that breeds it, therefore the sadness is without limit.

Conr. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have what blessing bringeth it ?

Conr. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder, that thou (being, as thou say'st thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief : I cannot hide what I am : I must be sad when I have a cause, and smile at no man's jests : eat when I have a stomach, and wait for no man's leisure ; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business ; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Conr. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this 'till you can do it without controlement ; you have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath taken you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself : it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace ; and better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any : in this, (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be deny'd but I am a plain-dealing villain ; I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchis'd with a dog, therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage : if I had my mouth, I would bite ; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking : in the mean time let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Conr. Can you make no use of your discontent ?

John. I will make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here ? what news, Borachio ?

Enter Borachio.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper ; the prince, your brother, is toally entertain'd by Leonaro, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on ? what is he for a fool, that betroths himself to unquietness ?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite Claudio ?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire ! and who ? and who ? which way looks he ?

For
 John
 thither
 up hat
 any w
 affi i n
 Com
 Joh
 that I

Enter
 Leon.

Bea
 but I
 Hen
 Bea
 mid-w
 image
 son, e

L o
 mouth
 face—

Bea
 enoug
 world

Leo
 if the

Bea
 every
 band

Leo
 Bea
 and m

is mo
 man ;
 that i

even
 into l

Leo
 Bea
 like a

you t
 for y
 for t
 merry

An

Eora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March-chick—Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to my displeasure: that young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way; you are both sure, and will assist me.

Conr. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper; their cheer is the greater, that I am subdu'd; 'would the cook were of my mind!—

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT II. SCENE, a Hall in Leonato's House.

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret and Ursula.

Leon. WAS not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks? I never can see him, but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man, that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick; the one is too like an image, and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tatling.

Leon. Then half signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in signior Benedick's face—

Beat. With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Beat. For the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening: lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lye in woolen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband, that has no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? he that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth, is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him; therefore I will even take six-pence in earnest of the bear-herd, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, go you into hell,——

Beat. No, but to the gate: and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckoo'd, with the horns on his head, and say, "get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heav'n; there's no place for you maids." So deliver I up my apes, and away to St. Peter, for the heav'ens; where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. Well, niece, I trust, you will be rul'd by your father.

(*To Hero*)

Beat. Yes, faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curt'sy, and say, Father as it pleases you; but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curt'sy, and say, Father as it pleaseth me.

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not 'till god make men of some other metal than earth; would it not grieve a woman to be over-mast'rd with a piece of valiant dust; to make account of her life to a clod of way-ward marle? no uncle. I'll none; Adam's sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you; if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not woo'd in good time, if the prince be too importunate, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer; for, hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly modest, as a measure, full of state and anchentry; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, 'till he sinks into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle, I can see a church by daylight. *(Music plays.)*

Leon. The revellers are entering, brother; make good room. *(Music again.)*

Enter Pedro, Claudio, Penedick, and Balthazar, in masquerade,

Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for god defend, the lute should be like the case!

Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house of Jove.

Hero. Why then your visor should be thatch'd

Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

Faith. Well; I would, you did like me.

Marg. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayer's aloud.

Balth. I love you the better, the heavens may cry amen,

Marg. God match me with a good dancer!

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And god keep him out of my sight when the dance is done—answer clerk.

Balth. No more words, the clerk is answered.

(a dance by the Masqueraders.)

Beat. Will you not tell me, who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me, who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales; well this was signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure, you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why he is the prince's jester; a very dull fool, only his gift is in devising possible slanders: none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy; for he both pleaseth men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him; I am sure he is in the fleet; I would, he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do, he'll but break a comparison or two on me; which, peradventure, not mark'd, or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy, and then there's a partridge wing sav'd, for the fool will eat no supper that night. We must follow the leaders.

(Music within.)

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

(Exeunt.)

Manent John, Borachio, and Claudio.

John. Sure, my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it: the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio; I know him by his bearing.

John. Are you not signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love, he is enamour'd on Hero; I pray you, dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth; you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know ye, he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come, let us to the banquet. *(Exeunt John and Bora.)*

Claud. Thus answer I in the name of Benedick, But hear this ill news with the ears of Claudio.

'Tis certain so, the prince wooes for himself.
 Friendship is constant in all other things,
 Save in the office and affairs of love;
 Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues,
 Let every eye negotiate for itself,
 And trust no agent; beauty is a witch,
 Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
 This is an accident of hourly proof,
 Which I mistrusted not. Farewell then, Hero!

Enter Benedick.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an Usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? you must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drover; so they sell bullocks: but did you think, the prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man? 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you.

(Exit.)

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowle! now will he creep into sedges. But, that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! the Prince's fool! ha? it may be, I go under that tit'e, because I am merry; yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed. It is the base (tho' bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out? well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

Pedro. Now, signior, where's the Count? did you see him.

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have play'd the part of lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren, I told him, (and I think, told him true) that your grace had got the will of this young lady, and I offer'd him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken; or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt! what's his fault.

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy; who being overjoy'd with finding a bird's nest, shews it is companion and he steals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust, a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss, the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself,

and the rod he might have bestowed on you, (who as I take it) have stol'n his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their sing after your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

Pedro. The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman, that danc'd with her, told her she is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O, she's misus'd me past the indurance of a block; an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answer'd her; my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her; she told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impassable conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me; she speaks poignards, and every word stabs; if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgress'd; she would have made Hercules have turn'd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Would to god, some scholar would conjure her; for, certainly, while she is here a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary, and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed, all disquiet, horror and perturbation follow her.

Enter Claudio, Beatrice, Leonato and Hero.

Pedro. Look here she comes.

Bene. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes; that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard; do you any ambassage to the pigmies, rather than hold three words conference with this harpy; you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, sir, here's a dith I love not. I cannot endure this Lady Tongue.

Pedro. Come, lady; come; you have lost the heart of signior Benedick—You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord; lest I should prove the mother of fools: I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why, how now, Count, wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

Pedro. How then? sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well;

but civil, count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

Pedro. I faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true : though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won ; I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained ; name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy.

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes : his grace hath made the match, all grace say amen, to it.

Beat. Speak, count, 'tis your cue—

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy ; I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours : I give away myself for you, and doat upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let him not speak neither.

Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord, I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care ; my cousin tells him in his ear, that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good lord, for alliance ! thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sun-burn'd ; I may sit in a corner, and cry, heigh ho ! for a husband.

Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting : hath your grace ne'er a brother like you ? your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me, lady ?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days ; your grace is too costly to wear every day ; but, I beseech your grace, pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you ; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cry'd ; but then there was a star danc'd, and under that I was born. Cousins, God give you joy.

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of ?

Beat. I cry your mercy, uncle : by your graces pardon.

(Exit Beatrice.)

Pedro. By my troth a pleasant spirited lady.—Count Claudio when mean you to go to church ?

Claud. To morrow, my lord ; time goes on crutches, 'till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not 'till Monday, my dear son, and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing ; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us ;

I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules's labours* which is, to bring signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other; I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My Lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights watchings.

Claud. And I, my Lord.

Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my Lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know; thus far I can praise him, he his of a noble strain, of approv'd valour, and confirm'd honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps will so practice on Benedick, that in despite of his quick wit, and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love Gods; go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE changes to another Apartment in Leonato's House.

Enter Don John and Borachio.

John. It is so, the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me; I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my Lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Shew me briefly how.

Bora. I think, I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margeret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her Lady's chamber window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper; go you to the Prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wrong'd his honour in marrying the renown'd Claudio, (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato; look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go then find me a meet hour, to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio, alone; tell them, that you know

Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio, as in a love of your brother's honour who hath made his match; and his friend's reputation, (who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid), that you have discover'd thus; they will hardly believe this without trial: offer them instances, which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window; hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margeret term me Borachio; and bring them to see this very night, before the intended wedding; for in the mean time I will to fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent; and there shall appear such seeming truths of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance and all the preparation overthrow'n.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put in practice; be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be thou constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE *Changes to Leonato's Orchard.*

Enter. Benedick,

Bene. I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laugh'd as such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love! and such a man is Claudio. I have known, when there was no music with him but the drum and fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and pipe; I have known, when he would have walk'd ten mile a-foot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is turn'd orthographer, his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so convert'd, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not. I will not be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it 'till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool: one woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well. But 'till all graces be one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me: noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha! the Prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

(Withdrawing.)

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio, and Balthazar.

Pedro. Come shall we hear this music?

Claudio. Yea, my good lord; ; how still the evening is, As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection;
I pray thee, sing; and let me woo no more.

Balth. Now, divine air; now is his soul ravish'd! is it not
strange, that sheeps guts should hale souls out of men's bodies?
well, horn for my money, when all's done.

The S O N G.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never:

Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blith and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into hey nony, nony.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo,
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The frauds of men were ever so,
Since summer was first leasy:
Then sigh not so, &c.

Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

Balth. If he had been a dog, that should have howl'd thus,
they wou'd have hang'd him; and, I pray God, his bad voice
bode no mischief! I had as lief have heard the night-raven.

Pedro. Yet, marry, dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray thee,
get us some excellent music; for to-morrow night we would
have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord. (*Exit Balthazar.*)

Pedro. Do so: farewell. Come hither, Leonato; what was it
you told me off to day, that your niece Beatrice was in love
with signior Benedick?

Claud. O, ay;—stalk on, stalk on, the fowl sits. I did never
think, that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but mo't wonderful, that she should
so doat on signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward be-
haviour seem'd ever to abhor.

Bae. Is't possible, sits the wind in that corner. (*Aside.*)

Leon. By my troth my lord, I cannot tell what to think of
it: but that she loves him with an iragred affection, it is past
the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be, she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was never counterfeit of
passion came so near the life of passion, as she discovers it.

Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shews she?

Claud. Bait the hook well, this fish will bite. (*Aside.*)

Leon. What effects, my lord? she will fit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

Pedro. How, how, I pray you? you amaze me: I would have thought, her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick:

Bene. (*Aside.*) I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it; knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en th' infection, hold it up. (*Aside.*)

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No, and swears she never will; that's her torment—she doth indeed, my daughter says so; and the ecstacy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is, sometimes, afraid she will do desperate outrage to herself.

Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. Never tell him, my lord; let her wear it off with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible, she may wear her heart out first.

Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love Benedick well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk, dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation. (*Aside.*)

Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry; the sport will be, when they hold an opinion of one another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see, let us send her to call him to dinner. (*Aside.*) (*Exeunt.*)

Benedick advances from the Arbour.

Bene. This can be no trick, the conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from Hero; they seem to pity the lady; it seems, her affections have the full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited: I hear, how I am censur'd; they say, I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection—I did never think to marry—I must not seem proud—happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending: they say, the lady is fair; 'tis a truth I can bear them witness: and virtuous;—'tis so, I cannot reprove it: and wise, but for loving me—by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly; for I will be horribly in love with her.—I may chance to have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage; but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves

the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quippes and sentences, and these paper-bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? no: the world must be peopled. When I said, I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live 'till I were marry'd. Here comes Beatrice: by this day, she's a fair lady; I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Bat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choak a daw withall: you have no stomach, signior; fare you well. *[Exit.]*

Bene. Ha! against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner,—there's a double meaning in that. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you took pains to thank me;—that's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew! I will go get her picture. *(Exit.)*

ACT III. SCENE *continues in the Orchard.*

Enter Hero, Margaret, and Ursula.

Hero. **G**OOD Margaret run thee into the parlour,
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice,

Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say, that thou overheard'st us;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
To listen our purpose; this is thy office,
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant, presently.

(Exit.)

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick;
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice: of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hear-say: now begin.

Enter Beatrice, running towards the arbour.

For look, where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground to hear our conference.
The pleasant 't angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait.

Urf. Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing.

Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.—
 No, truly, Ursula, she's too disdainful;
 I know, her spirit are as coy and wild
 As haggards of the rock.

Urf. But art sure,
 That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.
 They did intreat me to acquaint her of it;
 But I perswaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
 To with him wrestle with affection,
 And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urf. Why did you so? doth not the gentleman
 Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed,
 As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

Hero. O God of love! I know, he doth deserve
 As much as may be yielded to a man:
 But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
 Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.
 Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
 Misprizing what they look on; and her wit
 Values itself so highly, that to her
 All matter else seems weak; she cannot love,
 Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
 She is so self-indeared.

Urf. Sure, I think so;
 And therefore certainly it were not good
 She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
 How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
 But she would spell him backward; if fair-fac'd,
 She'd swear, the gentleman should be her sister;
 If black, why, nature, drawing of an antic,
 Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
 If low, an Aglet very vilely cut;
 If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
 If silent, why, a block moved with none.
 So turns she every man the wrong side out,
 And never gives to truth and virtue that,
 Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

Urf. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable,

Hero. But who dare tell her so? if I should speak,
 She'd mock me into air; O, she would laugh me
 Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
 Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
 Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly;
 It were a better death than die with mocks.

Urf. Yet tell her of it; hear what she will say.

Hero. No, rather I will go to Benedick,
 And counsel him to fight against his passion.
 And, truly, I'll devise some honest flanders
 To stain my cousin with: one doth not know,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

21

How much an ill word may impositon liking.

Urf. O do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
(Having so swift and excellent a wit,
As she is priz'd to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Benedick.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urf. His excellence did earn it, 'ere he had it.
When are you marry'd, madam?

Hero. Why, every day; to-morrow; come, go in,
I'll shew thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Urf. She's lim'd, I warrant you; we have caught her,
Madam?

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;
Some Cupids kill with arrows, some with traps. *(Exit.)*

Beatrice advancing.

Beat. What fire is in my ears? can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such
And Benedick, love on, I will requite thee;

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
If thou dost love, thy kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band. *(Exit.)*

SCENE Leonato's house.

Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and Leonato.

Pedro. I do but stay 'till your marriage be consummate, and
then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Pedro. Nay, I will only be hold with Benedick for his company;
for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot,
he is all in 'rth; he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string,
and the little hangman dare not shoot at him; he hath a heart as
sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his
heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I; methinks you are sadder.

Cand. I hope he is in love.

Pedro. Hang him, truant, there's no true drop of blood in him,
to be truly touched with love; if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ach.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Pedro. What? sigh for the tooth-ach!

Leon. Which is but a humour, or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love—If he be not in love with some
woman, there is no believing old signs; he brushes his hat
o'mornings; what should that bode?

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civit; can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lute-string.

Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude he is in love.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despite of all, dyes for him.

Pedro. She shall be bury'd with her heels upwards.

Bene. Yet this is no charm for the tooth-ach. Old signior, walk aside with me, I have study'd eight or nine wise words to speak to you which these hobby-horses must not hear.

(*Exit Benedick and Leonato*)

Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so: Hero and Margaret have by this play'd their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another, when they meet.

(*Enter Don John.*)

John. My lord and brother, God save you.

Pedro. Good den, brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

Pedro. In private?

John. If it please you; yet Count Claudio may hear; for, what I would speak of concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. Means your lordship to be marry'd to-morrow?

(*To Claudio.*)

Pedro. You know, he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you, discover it.

John. You may think, I love you not; let that appear hereafter; and aim better at me by that I now will manifest; for my brother, I think he holds you well, and in dearnefs of heart hath help to affect your ensuing marriage; surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bestow'd!

Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you, and circumstances shortn'd, (for the hath been too long a talking of) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who? Hero?

John. Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say, she were worse; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it; wonder not 'till further warrant; go but with me to night: you shall see her chamber-window enter'd, even

the night before her wedding day; if you love her, then to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

Pedra. I will not think it—

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know; if you will follow me, I will shew you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to night why I should not marry rhe to morrow; in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no farther, 'till you are my witnesses; bear it coldly but 'till night, and let the issue shew itself.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE changes to the streets.

Enter Dogberry and Verges, with the Watch.

Dog. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were a pity but they should suffer salvations, body and soul.

Dog. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dog. First, who think you the most deartlefs man to be constable?

1 Watch. Hugh Oateake, sir, or George Seacole: for they can write and read.

Dog. Come hither, neighbour Seacole: God hath blest you with a good name; and to be a well favour'd man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature.

1 Watch. Both which, master constable—

Dog. You have: I knew, it would be your answer. Well for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity: you are thought here to be the most senselefs and fit man for the constable of the watch, therefore bear you the lanthorn; this is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand in the prince's name.

2 Watch. How if he will not stand?

Dogb. Why, then take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects; you shall also make no noise in the streets;

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

for, the watch to babble and talk, is most tolerable, and not to be endur'd.

2 Watch. We had rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend; only have a care that your bills be not stolen: well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 Watch. How if they will not?

Dog. Why, then let them alone 'till they are sober; if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

2 Watch. Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him by virtue of your office to be no true man; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2 Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office you may; but, I think, they that touch pitch will be defil'd: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him shew himself what he is, and stir out of your company.

Verg. You have been always call'd a merciful man partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

2 Watch. How if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying: for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge: you constable, are to present the prince's own person; if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, bi'rady, that I think, he cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him; marry, not without the prince be willing: for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. Bi'rady, I think, it be so.

Dogb. Ha ha, ha! well, masters, good night; an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me; keep your fellow's counsels and your own, and good night; come neighbour.

2 Watch. Well, masters, we hear our charge; let us go sit here upon the church bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about signior Leonato's door, for the wedding being there to morrow, there is a great coil to night; adieu; be vigilant, I beseech you. (Exeunt Dogberry and Verges.

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Bora. What! Conrade—

Watch. Peace, sir not.

(Aside.)

Bora. Conrade, I say!

Conr. Here, man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Stand thee close then, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. Some treason, masters; yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Conr. Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

Bora. Thou should'st rather ask, if it were possible any villany should be so cheap? for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Conr. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shews thou art confirm'd; thou knowest, that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak is nothing to a man.

Conr. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the fashion.

Conr. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush, I may as well say, the fool's the fool; but see'st thou not, what a Deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. I know'n that deformed; he has been a vile thief these seven years; he goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear some body?

Conr. No, 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily he turns about all hot-bloods between fourteen and five and thirty.

Conr. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so, neither; but know that I have to night wooed Margeret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress's chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night—I tell this tale vilely—I should first tell thee, how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed, and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Conr. And thought they, Margeret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew, she was Margeret; away went Claudio enraged; swore, he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the Temple, and there before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

Watch. We charge you in the Prince's name, stand.

Watch. Call up the right master constable; we have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the common-wealth.

1 Watch. And one Deformed is one of them; I know him, he wears a lock.

Conr. Masters, masters—

2 Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Conr. Masters,—

1 Watch. Never speak; we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these mens bills. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE, Here's apartment in Leonato's house.

Enter Hero, Margeret, and Ursula.

Marg. Troth, I think, your other rebato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth, it's not so good; and I warrant, your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another. I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, and your gown's a most rare fashion, i'faith. I saw the dutcheis of Milan's gown, that they praise so; but for a fine quaint, graceful and elegant fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy!

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee, art not asham'd?

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now? do you speak in the sick tune?

Be. I am out of all other tune, methinks.—'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin? 'tis time you were ready: by my troth, I am exceeding ill; hey-ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. By my troth I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distill'd *Carduus Benedictus*, and lay it to your heart; it is the only thing for a qualm.

Beat. *Benedictus? Benedictus?* why you have some moral in this *Benedictus*.

Marg. Moral? no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning. I meant plain holy-thistle; you may think, perchance, that I think you are in love; nay, b'rlady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out with thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love: yet Benedick was such another, and now he is become a man; he swore, he would never marry, and yet now, in despight of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging; and how you may be converted, I know not; but, methinks, you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Enter Ursula.

Urs. Madam, withdraw; the Prince, the Count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE, *another Apartment in Leonato's House.*

Enter Leonato, with Dogberry and Verges.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that discerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for, you see, 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, that it is, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little of the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, as honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honestest than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous; *palabras*, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke's officers; but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a King, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ha?

Dogb. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and tho' I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, hath taken a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking, as they say; when the age is in, the wit is out; God help us, it is a world to see: well said, i'faith, neighbour Verges, well, he's a good man; an two men ride an horse, one must ride behind; an honest soul, i'faith, sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to be worship'd; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts, that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, sir; our watch have, indeed, comprehend-
ed two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morn-

ing examin'd before your worst ip.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me ; I am now in great haste, as may appear unto you.

D. gb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go : fare you well. (*Ex Leon.*)

Dogb. Go, good partner, go get you to Francis Scatole, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail ; we are now to examine those men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

D. gb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant ; here's that shall drive some of them to a non-come. Only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the jail.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT IV. SCENE, *a Church.*

Enter D. Pedro, D. John, Leonato, Friar, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, and Beatrice.

Leon. **C**OME, friar Francis, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady ?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be marry'd to her, friar ; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be marry'd to this Count ?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoin'd, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero ?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, Count ?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

Claud. O what men dare do ! what men may do ! what Men daily do !

Bene. How now ! Interjections ?

Claud. Stand thee by, friar ; father, by your leave ; Will you with free and unconstrained soul Give me this maid your daughter ?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth May counterpoise this rich and precious gift ?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness : There, Leonato, take her back again ; She's but the sign and semblance of her honour. Behold, how like a maid the blushes here ! O, what authority and shew of truth Can cunning sin cover itself withal ! She knows the heat of a luxurious bed ; Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord ?

Cla.

Not k

Leo.

I have

And

Cla.

I neve

But, a

Bashfu

Her.

Cla.

You se

As cha

But yo

Than

That r

Hero.

Leon.

Pedro.

I stand

To lin

Leon.

John.

Bene.

Hero.

Claud.

Is this t

Is this f

Leon.

Claud.

And, br

That yo

Leon.

Hero.

What ki

Claud.

Hero.

With an

Claud.

Hero hen

What ma

Out at ye

Now, if

Hero.

Pedro.

I am forr

Myself, n

Did see h

Talk with

Who hat

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

19

Claud. Not to be marry'd,
Not knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear, my lord, if you
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity—

Claud. No, Leonato;
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to his sister, shew'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?

Claud. Out on thy seeming! I will write against it.
You seem to me as a Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

Hero. Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?

Leon. Sweet Prince, why speak not you?

Pedro. What should I speak?

I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial!

Hero. True! O God!

Claud. Leonato, stand I here?

Is this the Prince? Is this the Prince's brother?

Is this fair Hero's? are our eyes our own?

Leon. All this is so: but what of this, my lord.

Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter,
And, by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O God defend me, how am I beset!
What kind of catechizing call you this?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not Hero? who can blot that name
With any just reproach?

Claud. Marry, that can Hero—

Hero herself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

edrs. Leonato,

I am sorry, you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this griev'd Count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window;
Who hath, indeed, most like a liberal villain,

Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie, they are not to be nam'd, my lord,
Not to be spoken of;

There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence, to utter them: thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud. O Hero! what a hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About the thoughts and counsels of thy heart?
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall Conjecture hank,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harin;
And never shall it be more gracious.

Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me? (*Herofaints.*)

Beat. Why, how now, cousin, wherefore sink you down?

John. Come, let us go; these things, come thus to sight,
Smother her spirits up. (*Exe. D. Pedro, D. John and Claud*)

Bene. How doth the lady?

Beat. Dead, I think; help, uncle.

Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

Leon. O fate! take not away thy heavy hand;
Death is the fairest cover for her shame,
That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero?

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up?

Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not?

Leon. Wherefore? why, doth not every earthly thing

Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny

The story that is printed in her blood?

Griev'd I, I had but one?

Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?

I've one too much by thee.

O, she is fall'n

Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea

Hath drops too few to wash her clean again.

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient;

For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to say.

Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is bely'd.

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

Beat. No, truly, not; altho' until last night
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron.
Would the two Prince's lie? and Claudio lie?
Who lov'd her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears! Hence from her, let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little.

For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune;
By noting of the lady. I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whiteness bear away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the error that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool,
Trust not my reading, nor my observation,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leon. Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest, that all the grace, that she hath left,
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury she not denies it:
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
That, which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he your accus'd of?

Hero. They know, that do accuse me; I know none:
If I know more of any man alive,
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy! O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frames of villanies.

Leon. I know not: if they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them all shall well hear of it.

Friar. Pause a while,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead;
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead, indeed:

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

Friar. Marry, this, well carry'd, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse;
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travel look for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,

Of every hearer : for it so falls out.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the Friar advise you :
And though, you know, my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Friar. 'Tis well consented; presently away ;
For to strange forces, strangely they strain the cure
Come, lady, die to live ; this wedding day,
Perhaps, is but prolong'd : have patience and endure.

(*Exeunt.*)

Man nt-Benedick and Beatrice.

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while ?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire her.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely, I do believe, your fair cousin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, much might the man deserve of me, that would
right her !

Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship ?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it ?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you ; is not
that strange ?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not ; it were as possible
for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you ; but believe me
not ; and yet I lie not ; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing.
I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lov'st me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it, that you love me ; and I will make
him eat it, that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your words ?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devis'd to it ; I protest, I
love thee.

Beat. Why then, God forgive me.

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice ?

Beat. You have stay'd me in a happy hour ; I was about to
protest, I lov'd you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left
to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha, not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny ; farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, tho I am here ; there is no love in you ;
nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice, —

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy ?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slander'd, scorn'd, dishonour'd my kinswoman ! O, that I were a man ! what ! bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour — O God, that I were a man ! I would eat his heart in the market place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice.

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window ? — a proper saying !

Bene. Nay, but Beatrice.

Beat. Sweet Hero ! she is wrong'd, she is slander'd, she's undone.

Bene. Beat —

Beat. Princes and Counts ! surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count-comfest, a sweet gallant, surely ! O that I were a man for his sake ! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake ! but manhood is melted into curtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too ; he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lye, and swears it : I cannot be man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice ; by this hand I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul, that Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero ?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd ; I will challenge him, I will kiss your hand, and so leave you ; by this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account ; as you hear of me, so think of me ; go comfort your cousin ; I must say, she is dead, and so farewell.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE changes to a Prison.

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Borachio, Conrade, the Town Clerk, and Sexton, in gowns

To. Cl. Is our whole dissembly appear'd ?

Dogb. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton !

Sexton. Which be the malefactors ?

Verg. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Dogb. Nay, that's certain, we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examin'd ? let them come before master constable.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, let them come before me ; what's your name, friend.

Bora. Borachio.

To. Cl. Pray, write down, Borachio. Yours, sirrah ?

Conr. I am a gentleman, Sir, and my name is Conrade.

To. Cl. Write down, master gentleman Conrade; masters, do you serve God?

Conr. Yea, Sir, we hope.

To. Cl. Write down, that they hope they serve God: and write God first: for God defend, but God should go before such villains.—Masters, it is proved a' ready that you are a little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so shortly; how answer you for yourselves?

Conr. Marry, Sir, we say, we are none.

To. Cl. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you, but I will go about with him. Come you hither, firrah, a word in your ear, Sir; I say to you, it is thought you are both false knaves.

For. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

To. Cl. Well, stand aside; 'fore God, they are both in a tale; have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton. Master town-clerk, you go not the way to examine, you must call the watch that are their accusers.

To. Cl. Yea, marry, that's the dearest way, let the watch come forth; masters, I charge you in the prince's name accuse these men.

Enter Watchmen.

Watch. This man said, sir, that Don John the prince's brother was a villain.

To. Cl. Write down, prince John a villain; why this is flat perjury to call the prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master town clerk—

To. Cl. Pray thee, fellow, peace; I do not like thy look, promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

Bora. Marry, that he had receiv'd a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully.

To. Cl. Flat burglary, as ever was committed.

Dog. Yea, by th' mass, that it is.

Sexton. What's else, fellow?

Watch. And that Count Claudio did mean, by his words to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

To. Cl. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stol'n away: Hero was in this manner accus'd, and in this very manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly dy'd. Master Constable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato; I will go before, and show him their examination. *[Exit.]*

Dog. Come let them be opinion'd.—come, bind them, thou naughty varlet.

Conr. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass—

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O, that he were here to write me down an ass! but, masters, remember, that I am an ass though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass; no, thou villain, thou art full of piety, and shall be prov'd upon thee by good witness; I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer; and which is more, an householder, and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina, and one that knows the law; go to, and a rich fellow enough; go to, and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him; bring him away; O that I had been writ down an ass!—

(Exeunt.)

ACT V. SCENE, *before Leonato's House.*

Enter Leonato and Antonio.

Ant. IF you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Give not me counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear.
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father, that to lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience;
O no; 'tis all mens office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
Put no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself; therefore give me no counsel.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace; I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the tooth-ach patiently;
However they have writ the style of Gods,
And made a pitch at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself:
Make those, that do offend you, suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason; nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me, Hero is belov'd;
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the Prince;
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio.

Ant. Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily.

Pedro. Good den good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you my lords?

Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord! well fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.

Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud. Who wrongs him?

Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.

Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear;
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon. Tush, tush, man, never flee and jest at me;
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool;
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What have I done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old: know, Claudio, to thy head.
Thou hast so wrong'd my innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence bye;
And, with grey hairs, and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man;
I say, thou hast bely'd mine innocent child,
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies bury'd with her ancestors,
O, in a tomb where never I and she slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany;

Claud. My villany?

Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine, I say.

Pedro. You say not right, old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,

I'll prove it on his body, if he dare;
Despight his nice sense and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustyhood.

Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daffe me? thou hast kill'd my child,
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed;
But that's no matter, let him kill one first;
Win me and wear me, let him answer me?
Come, follow me, boy; come, boy, follow me;
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foaming fence;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother,——

Ant. Content yourself; God knows, I lov'd my Niece;
And she is dead slander'd to death by vil'ains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue;
Boys, apes, braggarts, jacks, milk-sops!

Leon. Brother Anthony,——

Ant. Hold your content; what, man? I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple:
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-mongring boys,
That lye, and cog, and flout deprave and slander,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,

How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.

Leon. Eut, brother Anthony,——

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter;

Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.

Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience,
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my Honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my Lord——

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No! come, brother, away, I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it. [*Exe. ambo.*]

Enter Benedick.

Pedro. See, see, here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now, Signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

Pedro. Welcome, Signior; you are almost come to part
almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have our two noses snapt off with
two old men without teeth.

Pedro. Leonato and his brother; what think'st thou? had
we fought, I doubt, we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour; I came to
seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are
high proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away:
wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

Claud. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw to
pleasure us.

Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale: art thou sick
or aggrey?

Claud. What, courage, man: what tho' care kill'd a cat,
thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, if you charge
it against me.—I pray you chuse another subject.

Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he
be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain; I jest not. I will make it good
how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do
me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have kill'd a
sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me
hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Pedro. What, a feast?

Claud. Faith, I thank him: he hath bid me to a calve's

head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say, my knife's naught.

Pedro. But when shall we see the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea and text underneath. Here dwells Benedick the married man.

Bene. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind; I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour; you break jests as brag-garts do their blades, which, God be thank'd, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you; I must discontinue your company; your brother, the bastard is fled from Messina: you have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my lord lack-beard there, he and I shall meet; and 'till then, peace be with him!

(*Exit* Benedick.)

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest, and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Enter Dogberry, Verges, Conrade and Borachio guarded.

Pedro. But, soft you, did he not say, my brother was fled?

Dogb. Come, you, sir; if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance; nay, and you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be look'd to.

Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound? Borachio one?

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Mairry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have bely'd a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixthly and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud. Rightly reason'd, and in his own division.

Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned confiable is too cunning to be understood. What's your offence?

Bra. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this Count kill me: I have deceiv'd even your very eyes; what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night over-heard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incens'd me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me count Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgrac'd her, when you should marry her; my villany upon record, which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat ovey to my shame; the lady is dead upon mine and

my master's false accusation ; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood ?

Claud. I have drank poison while he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this ?

Bora. Yes, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery ;
And fled upon this vil any.

Claud. Sweet Hero ! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs ; by this time, our
Sexton hath reformed signior Leonato of the matter ; and mas-
ters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve,
that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, he comes master signior Leonato, and the Sex-
ton too.

Enter Leonato, and Sexton, and Servants.

Leon. Tell me the villain's name for his eyes ;
That when I meet another man like him

I may avoid him ; which of these is he ?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou, art thou the slave, that with thy breath
Hast kill'd mine innocent child ?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain ; thou bely'st thyself ;
Here stand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled, that had a hand in it :
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death ;
Record it with your high and worthy deeds ;
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak : chuse your revenge yourself ;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin ; yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.

Pedro. By my soul, nor I ;
And yet to satisfy this good o'd man,
I would bend under any heavy weight,
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. You cannot bid my daughter live again,
That were impossible ; but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she dy'd. Come you to my house,

Claud. O noble sir !
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me :
I do embrace your offer ; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. I will expect your coming. *(Exit, Pedro and Claud.)*
This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd in all this wrong,

Hir'd to't by your brother.

Bona No, by my soul, she was not.
Nor I new not what she did, when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me an ass; I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment; and also the watch heard them talk of one deformed: pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation!

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner; and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which, I beseech your worship, to correct yourself, for the example of others, God keep your worship; I wish your worship well: Go restore you to health; I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wish'd, God prohibit it. Come, neighbour.

(*Exeunt.*)

Leon. Bring you these fellows on, we'll talk with Margaret, How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow (*Exe. severally.*)

SCENE changes to Leonato's House.

Enter Benedick and Margaret.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a stile, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep above stairs?

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And your's as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret, it will not hurt a woman; and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice. (*Exit. Margaret.*)

(*Sings.*) The god of love, that sits above, and knows me, and knows me, how pitiful I deserve—I mean in singing; but in loving. Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse; why, they were never so truly turn'd over and over, as my poor self, in love; marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have try'd; I can find out no rhyme to a lady but baby, an innocent's rhyme; for scorn, horn, a hard rhyme; for school, fool, a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings; no, I was not born under a rhiming planet, for I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, would'st thou come when I call thee ?

Beat. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O. stay but 'till then.

Beat. Then, is spoken ; fare you well now ; and yet ere I go, let me go with what I came for, which is, with knowing what hath past between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words are but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome ; therefore I will depart unkiss'd.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of its right sense, so forcible is thy wit ; but, I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undertakes my challenge ; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward ; and, I pray thee, now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ?

Beat. For them all together ; which maintain'd so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them : but for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me ?

Bene. Suffer love ! a good epithet ; I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of art, I think ; alas ! poor heart, if you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours ; for I will never love that, which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession ; there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours ; if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monuments, than the beetle sings, and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you ?

Bene. Why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum ; therefore it is most expedient for the wise, if Don worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself ; so much for praising myself ; who, I myself will bear witness, is praise-worthy ; and now tell me, how doth your cousin ?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you ?

Beat. Very ill too.

Enter Ursula.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle ! it is proved, my lady Hero hath been falsely accus'd ; the Prince and Claudio mightily abus'd ; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone.

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior ?

Bene. I will live in thy eyes, die in thy lap, and be bury'd in thy heart ; and moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle.

F

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE *changes to Leonato's House.**Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret, Ursula, Antonio, Friar and Hero.**Friar.* Did I not tell you, she was innocent ?*Leon.* So are the Prince and Claudio, who accus'd her, Upon the error that you heard debated.

But Margaret was in some fault for this ;

Although against her will, as it appears.

Ant. Well ; I am glad, that all things sort so well.*Bene.* And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.*Leon.* Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all, Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,

And when I send for you, come hither mask'd :

The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour

To visit me ; you know your office, brother,

You must be father to your brother's daughter,

And give her to young Claudio. *(Exit Ladies.)**Ant.* Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.*Bene.* Friar, I must intreat your pains, I think.*Friar.* To do what, signior ?*Bene.* To bind me or undo me, one of them ;

Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,

Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.*Bene.* And I do with an eye of love require her.*Leon.* The sight whereof, I think, you had from me, From Claudio, and the Prince ; but what's your will ?*Bene.* Your answer, sir, is enigmatical ;

But for my will, my will is, your good will

May stand with ours this day to be conjoin'd

In the state of honourable marriage ;

In which good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.*Friar.* And my help.*Enter Don Pedro and Claudio, with attendants.**Pedro.* Good morrow to this fair assembly.*Leon.* We here attend you ; are you yet determin'd

To-day to marry with my brother's daughter ?

Claud. I'll hold my mind, where she an Ethiop.*Leon.* Call her forth, brother, here's the friar ready.*(Exit Antonio.)**Pedro.* Good-morrow, Benedick ; why, what's the matter, That you have such a February face, So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness ?*Claud.* I think, he thinks upon the savage bull :

Tush, fear not man, we'll tin thy horns with gold,

And so all Europe shall rejoice at thee ;

As once Europa did at lusty Jove

When he would play the noble beast in love

Bene. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,

And some such strange bull leapt your father's cow ;
 And got a calf, in that same noble feat,
 Much like to you ; for you have just his bleat.

Enter Antonio, with Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula, mask'd.

Claud. Which is the lady I must seize upon ?

Ans. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why, then she's mine ; sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No, that you shall not, 'till you take her hand
 Before this friar, and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand ; before this holy friar,
 I am your husband if you like of me.

Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife. (*Unmasking.*)

And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.

Claud. Another Hero !

Hero. Nothing certainer.

One Hero dy'd defil'd, but I do live ;

And, surely, as I live, I am a maid.

Pedro. The former Hero ! Hero, that is dead !

Leon. She dy'd, my lord, but while her slander liv'd.

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify,

When, after that the holy rites are ended,

I'll tell thee largely of fair Hero's death :

Mean time let wonder seem familiar,

And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice ?

Beat. I answer to that name ; what is your will ?

Bene. Do not you love me ?

Beat. Why, no, no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio,
 Have been deceiv'd ; they swore, you did.

Beat. Do not you love me ?

Bene. Troth, no, no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret and Ursula,
 Have been deceiv'd ; for they did swear, you did.

Bene. They swore, you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore, you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no matter ; then you do not love me ?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompence.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't, that he loves her ;

For here's a paper written in his hand,

A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,

Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,

Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
 Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle ! here's our own hands against our hearts ;
 come, I will have thee : but, by the light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would yet deny you ; but, by this good day, I yield
 upon great persuation, and partly to save your life ; for, as I was
 told, you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace, I will stop your mouth—— (*Kissing her.*)

Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man.

Bene. I'll tell thee what, Prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour: dost thou think, I care for a satire, or an epigram? no: if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him; in brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me, for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion; for thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but, in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hoped, thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends; let's have a dance ere we are marry'd, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, o' my word; therefore play, music. *Prince.* thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife; there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in sight, And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him 'till to-morrow: I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up, pipers. (*Dance.*)

(*Exeunt omnes.*)



THE END.

